

SISTERS' DEPARTMENT

A Mother's Duty.

'How can you write on that subject?' says a friend. 'How do you know what class of mothers to address? One mother's duty is to take in washing to support her children; another must do all her own work; another has to write articles or deliver lectures, while a few, comparatively, can just be mothers and fill their time with actual caring and doing for their children.'

Now that sounds true and also discouraging so far as my article goes, yet it is only a half truth, and half truths are often quite as dangerous as untruths. The washing, or housework, or lecturing, or writing is the mother's *work*, but the mother's *duties* lie back of, beyond, above all that, and are fulfilled, I truly believe, far more faithfully, as a rule, by the busy mothers than by those who have plenty of leisure. What are these duties which all mothers share in common? First and above all, a mother is to teach her child to feel God's touch, to know his voice, to obey his law. This duty should be understood to be laid upon us before the birth of our children. In cultivating her spiritual nature, a woman who is promised motherhood gives her child quick spiritual instincts; can she give it a richer endowment? Faith is easy to such a child; doubts find no lodging in his soul.

It is the mother's duty to teach the child that she, too, is 'under authority,' that her 'must' is not an arbitrary one, but she has heard it first spoken to her. How many naggings and fault-finding a clear understanding of this duty would repress! Yet how much more clearly we should see the importance of little things. 'Stop, Johnny, don't touch that book,' says the thoughtless mother who has never studied her duty toward her child. Johnny keeps on teasing, and by and by, 'for peace's sake,' gets the book. The thoughtful mothers tempted to say 'don't,' but remembering that once said it must be enforced, she proposes some other amusement, or sends master Johnny upstairs or round the corner on some errand, and puts the book out of sight. 'I teach my children to obey,' said a mother, as she boxed the little fellow's ears for climbing on a parlor chair to see a procession. 'I've forbidden him to get on these chairs.' Ten minutes later in another home a little man was carefully covering a chair with a newspaper. 'Willie hears music and wants to look out of the window; he has seen me prepare a chair so often for him, that now he never forgets to do it himself.' Now this was not a case of different

temperaments; the second mother was naturally of the slapping kind, but she realized her duty, and looking to God she did it. 'There are plenty of opportunities to insist on obedience,' she said, 'and I always try to think, first, *ought* Willie to do this, or that, or is it merely my will that desires it?'

A mother who clearly understands this duty will not 'pick up' after her boy, but even though it angers him at the time, insists that he should keep his things in their places. 'I must not for peace's sake, let my boy grow up selfish. This is his work, and I must not do it, though it be far easier to do it than to insist on his doing it.' Such a mother will not tell her boy that smoking is a sin, that theatre-going leads to hell, etc., but will make him feel that she must judge as to what is best for him while he is under her authority; will patiently and carefully show him a better way, will encourage any good, healthful taste he may have, and trust that with maturer years will come a right judgment in all things, remembering that her judgment is not infallible.

It is a mother's duty to give her child a healthy mind in a healthy body. This duty, too, lays a burden upon the mother before she sees her child. It will forbid her over exerting herself during the time of pregnancy; will put far from her all exciting or enervating reading; will make her study what food will form the best bone and muscle; will make the study of some simple physiology a duty and delight to her. Then, the child being given her, she will make its health all-important. What if she does miss many a delightful entertainment, fail to hear this or that public speaker!

If the choice lies between dragging her baby with her, or staying at home, knowing her duty she will not hesitate. Time enough to hear lectures and concerts by and by; if not here, then better ones up higher,' said a mother once to me. Having this duty as to a healthful body always in mind, a mother will carefully instill habits of personal cleanliness in her child. At any cost of time, even if less money can be earned because of attention to these things, the child is taught the laws of health, that every part of the body needs constant attention, that no garment worn during the twelve hours should be worn during the succeeding twelve. Modesty will be inculcated and insisted upon, for the wise mother knows that immodest behaviour often leads to actions which utterly ruin health. And this leads me to speak of a duty little understood, and often neglected by mothers—the duty of

teaching their children about themselves. As children grow up, to some of them there is no study so full of mystery and interest as the study of their physical being. A taste for this study is not, and should not be considered a depraved taste; it is perfectly right and legitimate, and the mother who understands her duty will meet the child's questions truthfully, remembering that nothing God has ordered is hideous or unclean unless used in a wicked way. —The Union Signal.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, and though to us 'a little while' may seem long, yet he does not forget his word. He is long suffering and compassionate, not willing that any should perish, but yet he is not slack concerning his promise nor his purpose, but will in due time bring to pass his plans, and fulfill his designs.

Let us learn to imitate the patience of God, and however others with vain and idle curiosity may desire the Holy One to hasten his work that they may see it, let us pray that he may direct our hearts 'into the love of God, and the patient waiting for Christ', that we may be found of him in peace, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

'A Little While.'

How indefinite these words! How much they mean to some, how little to others. The 'little while' of a child may be a moment or an hour; the 'little while' of a man may be a week or a year; but the 'little while' of God, who can measure?

To a child, even an hour seems to reach beyond the limits of 'a little while'; but to one who has lived long, time passes more rapidly; we are not in such haste to see the years go by. But to the great God, beneath whose eye the mighty ages roll from century to century, who knows the past, the present and future, the eternal now; who sees the end from the beginning; who reads at a glance the whole tale of human destiny;—who shall measure the 'little while' of which He speaks, and to which he directs the minds of his followers?

Who is Your Pilot.

With many it is ebb-water before the tide be full. The lamps of their lives are wasted almost as soon as they are lighted. The sand of their hour-glass is run out, when they think it is but newly turned. When men feel sickness arresting them, then they fear death is approaching. But we begin to die as soon as ever we begin to live. Every man's passing-bell hangs in his own steeple. Take him in his four elements of earth, air, fire, and water. In the earth, he is as

fleeing as dust; in the air, he is as disappearing as vapor; in the water, he is a breaking bubble; in fire he is a consuming smoke. Many think not of living any holier, till they can live no longer; but one today is worth two to-morrows. Reader, you know not how soon the sails of your life may be rolled up, or how nigh you may be to your eternal heaven; and if you have not Jesus as your pilot within you, you will suffer an eternal shipwreck.—Wm. Secker.

What Made the Baby Cross.

'Mamma, I wish you'd call the baby in; he's so cross we can't play,' cried Robert to his mamma one day, as he was playing in the yard with his sister and the baby.

'I don't think he would be cross if you were not cross to him,' said mamma, coming out. 'He does just as he sees you do. Just try him and see. Put your hat on one side of your head.'

Robbie did so, and presently the baby pushed his straw hat over on one side of his head.

'Whistle,' said mamma. Robbie did, and baby began to whistle too.

'Stop mocking me,' said Robbie, angrily, giving baby a push. Baby screamed and pushed Robbie back.

'There, you see,' said his mother, 'the baby does just as you do. Kiss him now, and you will see how quickly he will follow your example.'

Robbie did not feel exactly like doing this, but he did; and the baby hugged and kissed him back very warmly.

'Now, you see' said his mother, 'you can have a cross baby or a good baby of your little brother, just which you choose. But you must teach him yourself.'—Sel.

Self denial is a virtue of the highest quality, and he who has it not, and does not strive to acquire it, will never excel in anything.—Bishop Conybeare.

Self-denial is that which gives the martyr a crown of glory, and exalts the beggar above the dignity of a king.—Witsius.

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Resorts.

Pack says: 'The white man who drives a coal cart has to resort to soap and water, just as does a negro who has spent the day in whitewashing.'

But the most strange things of all are usually resorted to when a man gets sick.

Of course he doesn't want a doctor—at least not at first. He usually goes to the so-called saloon and gets a drink, which makes him feel rather dazed, so he takes another, and comes home temporarily elated, supposing himself cured.

When he wakes next morning, with a headache twice as bad as ever, and feeling feverish and cross, he concludes he will have to try something else.

He takes a dose of whatever he happens to have in the house—some liver renovator, kidney evaporator, or heart enlarger—and sets forth saying if he isn't better tomorrow he will send for the doctor.

Next morning he is sick in bed; the doctor is called, shakes his head, prescribes two or three kinds of medicine, according to his medical creed, but always insists upon perfect quiet, and that the patient must not go to his office for two weeks, or the result will be serious.

He does, in truth, lie in bed for a week or ten days, his recovery retarded by a multitude of remedies, and the knowledge that his business is going to ruin in his absence. When he does drag out at last, he finds that the family must deny themselves everything but the common necessities of life for some time to come, in order that the doctor's bill may be paid, and repairs made in the business.

Now, the proper thing for this man to have done was to have bought a bottle of New Style, Pleasant Taste Vinegar Bitters, the moment he felt the first headache, and to have taken two tablespoonfuls at once. Two or three half-doses, two days apart, after the first dose had taken effect, would have cured him and prevented his illness, and his consequent financial loss.

The man did not know this, or, as Beecher would have said, his foresight was not so good as his hindsight. Another time this man will know just what to do to save pain, time and money.

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